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New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations

The President: It is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay, who passed away on Wednesday, 5 October. On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to request the representative of Eritrea, who is present here, to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Eritrea and to the bereaved family of His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay. Allow me to say a few remarks.

This morning we are honouring the memory of our dear friend and colleague, Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay of Eritrea. Many here today knew Ambassador Tesfay personally, and the news of his sudden death has been met with deep sadness. In life, Ambassador Tesfay made a significant contribution to the United Nations, and many colleagues recall fondly his enthusiastic participation, on behalf of his nation, at the signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change here in this very Hall in April.

Beyond the United Nations, Ambassador Tesfay was a distinguished diplomat who served his country in a wide range of places, including as Permanent Representative to the African Union and Ambassador to Belgium, Canada, Ethiopia, the European Union, South Africa and the United States. He was a calm, eloquent and charismatic individual and an extremely accomplished athlete.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to extend to Ambassador Tesfay's family and loved ones, and to the Government and the people of Eritrea, our heartfelt condolences. If I may also add a personal note – like many here today, I have lost a dear friend with his passing. May Girma's soul rest in peace.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I join the General Assembly in conveying my deep sorrow at the loss of His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay, who passed away on 5 October in New York. I express my deep personal condolences, as well as the condolences of the United Nations system, to his family, to His Excellency Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, and to the Eritrean people.

Ambassador Girma presented his credentials as Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea to the United Nations on 23 April 2014. He was one of his country's highest-ranking diplomats. Over the course of his career, he served as Ambassador to the African Union, the European Union, Luxembourg, South Africa and the United States. A masterful diplomat and

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negotiator, he showed real dedication to intensifying the engagement of the United Nations with his country, which resulted in greater cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations funds and programmes and the authorities in Eritrea.

Throughout his life, he was a great promoter of multilateralism. I very much appreciated his insights and discussions with me and my colleagues in the broader United Nations system. His dedication to his country was always apparent but perhaps, most movingly, was symbolized by his unselfish work until the very last day of his life.

Once again, on behalf of the United Nations, I express our sadness as well as our commitment to continue working with the Government and the people of Eritrea to advance together across all three pillars of our work – peace, development and human rights.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Niger, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Wafy (Niger): It is with a very deep sense of bereavement that I stand here today on behalf of my colleagues of the African Group to say a few words on the very painful loss we all suffered when Ambassador Girma left us. It is so difficult to accept and come to terms with the fact that such a vivacious person would leave us without warning, although some of us, his friends, could see that lately he was somehow not exactly the old Girma we knew. Nevertheless, we had hoped that he would rediscover his zest for life.

There was one aspect to him that was always there and never changed despite his condition – his total dedication to his work and to defending the interests of his country. Ambassador Girma was a very famous soccer star when he was young. He subsequently became a freedom fighter, soon after finishing his graduate studies here in the United States. He was a student here in New York and he passed away in New York.

The African Group misses Ambassador Girma very much. All of us, including myself, considered Girma as a friend, with whom we laughed and with whom we carried out many important tasks. There is no doubt that the Africa Group lost one of its most dedicated diplomats, in whom we had great confidence for doing what is best for the Africa Group and Africa. I also believe that the United Nations has lost a good man, a person who knew the value of the Organization.

In the light of the foregoing, we consider the passing of Girma to be a great loss for the United Nations. I would like, on behalf of the African Group and on my own behalf, to express our most sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Eritrea and to Girma's family. May his soul rest in perfect peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): It is with great sadness that we learned of the untimely passing of our dear colleague and friend, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea, Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay. On behalf of the members of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Ambassador Tesfay as well as to the Government and the people of Eritrea.

Ambassador Girma was a devoted professional, a seasoned and widely respected diplomat who served his country for decades and a distinguished member of the diplomatic community at the United Nations. Over the course of his career, he spared no effort in representing his nation in a time of dramatic political transformation for Eritrea and the region. He leaves behind a legacy of diplomatic service as the Ambassador of Eritrea to the European Union, the African Union, the United States, Canada and the Republic of South Africa, his efforts to contribute to the respect of international law, peace and justice will be cherished.

Ambassador Tesfay successfully served as a Vice-President of the General Assembly and, on behalf of the African Group, led negotiations on the issue of addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. We also remember him as a great soccer player at home and at the United Nations diplomatic tournaments.

Ambassador Tesfay's untimely death is an irreparable loss for his country. Among us, his friends and colleagues, he will be greatly missed and dearly remembered.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, it is with great sadness that I address the General Assembly as we gather to remember Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea. As others have said before, our thoughts are with Ambassador Girma's family as well as with the Government and the people of Eritrea. His passing is a sad loss to our community here in New York and to those of us who knew Ambassador Girma. We will recall the warmth and skill with which he led the Mission of Eritrea at the United Nations. Ambassador Girma's sad death represents the personal loss of a friend, colleague and leader, but it is also a deep loss for Eritrea.

Many people here might have served with him in Addis Ababa, where he was Eritrea's Ambassador to the African Union and also to Ethiopia, or in Brussels, where he served as Ambassador to the European Union. Some may know him from when he served as Ambassador to the United States and Canada or as Ambassador to South Africa. There are few of us here today with such an impressive résumé, and our respect for Ambassador Girma's career and work is as deep as our sadness in meeting here to mark his loss.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): On 5 October, we sadly learned of the passing of one of our dear colleagues, Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay of the State of Eritrea. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group at the United Nations, I would like to extend to the people and the Government of Eritrea, as well as to the family of Ambassador Tesfay, our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies on his untimely passing.

As one of our colleagues, Ambassador Tesfay came with an impressive background and a wealth of experience from his many years of diplomacy. His experience working as the Ambassador of Eritrea to the European Union and the African Union showed his dedication to diplomacy and multilateralism. He fought for his nation's freedom and he was incredibly devoted to the success of his country. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, let me once again convey my sincerest condolences to Ambassador Tesfay's family and to the Government and the people of Eritrea.

We, the Asia-Pacific Group, would like to express our support and solidarity with the members of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea as they overcome the great loss of their colleague and ambassador. Throughout the halls of the United Nations he will be remembered as a remarkable diplomat and true friend who will be dearly missed. May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the host country.

Mr. McCulley (United States of America): I have the honour today of speaking on behalf of the Government of the United States, the country that has the privilege of hosting the United Nations. I offer our deepest condolences to the people of Eritrea, and particularly to the family and friends of Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay.

The diplomatic life takes one far from home, often for years or even decades at a time. Ambassador Girma served his people as Ambassador to the United States from 2001 to 2006, and since 2014 as their representative to the United Nations. As others have noted, he has also served as Ambassador to the African Union and the European Union. He leaves behind friends, family and the Mission he led. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Eritrea.

Mr. Gebreab (Eritrea): Allow me first to extend the deep appreciation of the people and the Government of Eritrea to you, Mr. President, for having organized this important event to pay tribute to the memory of one of Eritrea's finest sons, Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay, who passed away last week after battling cancer for several months. I would like to thank everyone who took the floor to honour and remember a colleague and friend who was close to many in this Hall.

We are very grateful and touched by everyone's presence here today at the General Assembly to pay homage to Girma Asmerom Tesfay. We welcome the words of sympathy and support that have been expressed in person or through phone calls, in visits to our Mission to sign the book of condolences, and the sending of cards and messages via social media. It is indeed heartening and, we believe, befitting a person who never failed to display warmth and friendship in his interactions with members of the United Nations family.

For his entire adult life, Ambassador Girma was a dedicated, tireless, passionate and accomplished fighter for the rights of the Eritrean people. Beginning

in his student days here in the United States, through his years as a freedom fighter and upon his last living breath as Eritrea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Girma had an unwavering faith in the Eritrean people and country, which he served with distinction. He was a champion, not only of the cause of Eritrea, but for fairness and justice for all. His sharp mind, quick wit, diplomatic savvy and selfless service were an invaluable contribution that will fondly be remembered.

In his diplomatic work at the United Nations, Girma interacted with all members, including with members of delegations with which he did not agree. He did not see barriers; rather he saw opportunities to engage, and engage he did with all to promote an inclusive peace for his country and the region. He was relentless in his endeavours and in articulating the positions and policies of his Government. He stressed the need for fairness and justice and for the equality of States and fought against the double-standard in all its forms.

In all his conversations, Girma kept in mind the importance of respecting the sovereignty of nations, the need to lift unjustified sanctions on developing countries and the non-politicization of human rights. He furthered cooperation among Member States and the United Nations system to promote these objectives. All the accolades and eulogies that have come from his friends and colleagues portray a masterful person with exceptional qualities of compassion, valour, selflessness, personal integrity, hard work and extraordinary resilience. Yet these descriptions, though apt, do not convey the full stature of Ambassador Girma.

His exceptional resilience is perhaps better captured in the dignified manner with which he fought the cruel illness that afflicted him over the past six months. Girma never voiced a single complaint, nor did he take a day off from his duties, in spite of his debilitating and malignant disease. Indeed, one of his last diplomatic functions was — in the middle of his treatment — to communicate from Asmara with and to respond to the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea again in defence against unjustified accusations lodged against his nation.

Ambassador Girma was a national hero who devoted 45 years of his life to defending freedom and national dignity. His was a life well lived. His passing is of course a great and permanent loss for Eritrea. For me personally, he was a comrade in arms, a close friend and an associate. We worked together with the Eritreans for Liberation in North America association in the United States and joined the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, the liberation movement that led Eritrea's war of independence, on the very same day. During the struggle for independence, we worked in the same department.

I only wish he had lived to see the redress of the injustices directed against his country, injustices he fought against with utter conviction, boundless determination and consummate confidence but always with an unfailing sense of humour. The struggle continues, and, as we in Eritrea say, "The victory of the people is assured".

The President: If the Assembly would permit me, I would like to make a short statement at this juncture to the representative of Eritrea. Having been lost in thought on the passing of our friend, I failed to thank him for his very moving statement. I wish to thank him for it now.

Agenda items 62 and 12

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/71/189 and A/71/203)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/71/211)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

The President: Throughout this year's Africa Week, we have joined in celebrating Africa's progress in sustainable development, human rights and the promotion of sustainable peace and security on the continent. We have also discussed how the international community can help to address persistent challenges so that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, along with the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, can all be realized.

Fundamental to these discussions has been a focus on stronger strategic and operational partnerships. In this context, it is imperative that we consider the pre-eminent and long-standing framework for development in Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

As a comprehensive, integrated and strategic framework for socioeconomic development in Africa, NEPAD aims to promote Africa-wide policies for growth by addressing priority areas, including macroeconomic policy, conflict prevention and resolution, the promotion of democracy and human rights, infrastructure and agricultural development, strengthening regulatory frameworks, the provision of education and training, and empowering women and girls. The critical need for all stakeholders to take a coordinated approach to sustainable development is paramount.

I commend the African Union's decision to align its Agenda 2063 with the 2030 Agenda. The efforts of so many African countries to begin structuring their national development frameworks around the provisions of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Agenda 2063 deserve particular commendation. In this regard, it is also encouraging that, as part of the ongoing efforts to implement the objectives of NEPAD within Africa, the NEPAD agency has been tasked with the fast-tracking implementation and monitoring of major Africa-wide development programmes and frameworks, including the Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the 15 years since the adoption of NEPAD, Africa has experienced unprecedented economic growth and progress in building major infrastructure, strengthening regional and national health systems, improving gender mainstreaming and working towards climate mitigation and adaptation in agriculture. While Africa's growth remains strong, unfavourable global economic conditions, including in trade and financing, volatile commodity prices, limited economic diversification and high levels of debt risk undermining hard-fought development gains. Tackling these challenges will require the sustained efforts of African countries and development partners alike, including the United Nations system, to strengthen capacity-building and increase investment in infrastructure, health services, regulatory reform, agricultural productivity and access to education.

The efforts by African countries to pursue a continental free trade area to strengthen intra-African trade and economic integration is well worth pursuing. So too is enhanced international support to African countries for debt relief and sustainability, foreign direct investment and, to combat illicit capital flows, access to international markets and technology transfer. South-South cooperation, as a complement to North-South and triangular cooperation, also remains an important tool for boosting economic growth and integration among African countries and should be enhanced.

One of the primary objectives of NEPAD is the empowerment of women and girls so that their full potential in political and economic life may be unlocked. In this regard, I commend the African Union's decision to declare 2015 the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development and 2016 the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women. However, despite these and other initiatives, numerous challenges continue to hinder progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, which is in turn impeding overall development and economic outcomes. In sub-Saharan Africa, gender inequality is estimated to be costing $95 billion per year. Specific programmes that strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment, promote their access to education and training and pursue the full realization of their rights should therefore be given priority as part of comprehensive efforts to drive sustainable development.

The United Nations has been a steadfast partner in Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable peace and development. I congratulate the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its work in coordinating United Nations system-wide support for NEPAD and the broader 2030 Agenda. Its work includes raising awareness of Africa's development needs and advocating for stronger partnerships to complement national and regional development efforts, including with civil society and the private sector.

The urgent need to strengthen global efforts to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is why we have made the principal objective of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly the drive for a universal push in implementing all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Through our SDG Implementation Strategy, we will be pushing implementation by providing sustained engagement to previously mandated SDG events and processes, including the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable

Urban Development, in Quito next week, for which I leave tomorrow; the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech, which I will be attending in November; and, of course, the High-Level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in New York, in the first week of June 2017. We will be supporting existing efforts within and outside of the United Nations system to drive strategic partnerships, a track which complements NEPAD's overarching goals and framework.

Finally, we will be backing a series of signature events that will lay the foundation for sustained implementation in key areas, including global awareness of the SDGs, particularly among young people, which will help to promote the development and engagement of young people, which in Africa will help to harness the demographic dividend. I will also be pushing opportunities to secure better financing for sustainable development, promote sustainable peace, empower women and girls, tackle poverty and inequality and advance protection of our oceans, environment and planet.

I would also like to take this opportunity to address our global efforts to combat malaria, particularly in Africa. In the five years since the start of the Global Decade to Roll Back Malaria, the World Health Organization estimates that up to 3.2 billion people — nearly half of the world's population — remain at risk of contracting malaria. As it is a preventable and treatable mosquito-borne disease, it is critical that we intensify our efforts to combat it. In this regard, I commend the decision of African countries to extend, from 2016 to 2020, the African Union Road Map on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Response in Africa.

As we embark upon a new and ambitious chapter of implementing the sustainable development framework, let us all join forces to reinvigorate our commitment to real partnerships that will fully realize the goals of NEPAD in Africa, eradicate malaria once and for all, and achieve each and every one of the Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the items we are discussing today (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211).

First of all, the Group of 77 and China would like to commend African leaders for their remarkable efforts and enduring commitment in the pursuit of Africa's regional development. The African Union's Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan demonstrate the region's shared vision for peace and development and the actions it is taking towards fulfilling that vision.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 has underscored the shared commitment of the international community to working tirelessly to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, and to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions, namely, economic, social and environmental, in a balanced and integrated manner. While African countries continue to implement their New Partnership for Africa's Development priorities in the context of Agenda 2063, the Group has recognized the complementarities between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, it is crucial that we continue to mobilize international support for the implementation of those Agendas in order to achieve greater synergies between the regional and international development frameworks.

In a time of unfavourable global economic conditions and increasing environmental challenges, African countries are among the most severely affected. Unless they have access to adequate and predictable resources for development, their attempts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly to address the issues of poverty and hunger, will continue to be undermined. In this regard, there is a need for a revitalized global partnership for Africa if we are to mobilize the means and resources to support the implementation of SDGs in the region, including but not limited to financing, trade, debt relief and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

The Group re-emphasizes the critical role of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI), which remain major sources of financing and development in Africa. The Group is deeply concerned about the fact that both ODA and FDI to Africa have declined in recent years. The Group therefore would like to reiterate that the fulfilment of our ODA commitments remains crucial, including the

commitment by many developed countries to achieve directed the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income to developing countries and directed the ODA target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income to the least developed countries. We urge those who have not fulfilled their commitments to step up efforts towards the ODA targets.

It is highly commendable that Africa's ratio of public debt to gross domestic product is lower today than it has been in decades. The Group believes that Africa's global development partners could provide the assistance needed by African countries to attain long-term debt sustainability. The Group would like to reiterate that North-South cooperation still lies at the core of the global partnership that drives Africa's development, but it is also complemented by South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation.

The Group of 77 and China is concerned at Africa's disproportionately low share in the volume of international trade, which stands at approximately 3.3 per cent. We reiterate the need for all countries and relevant multilateral institutions to continue to make efforts to enhance coherence in their trade policies towards African countries and to strengthen the efforts made to fully integrate African countries into the international trading system. It is also necessary to build their capacity to compete through such initiatives as Aid for Trade and assistance for addressing the adjustment challenges posed by trade liberalization.

Africa has had little experience with industrialization, with the result that it is facing numerous challenges in implementing the structural changes needed to revive the economy. Despite the fact that the General Assembly adopted the First and Second Industrial Development Decades for Africa, for the periods from 1980 to 1989 and from 1991 to 2000, respectively, to support Africa's efforts to overcome the challenges of industrialization, limited progress was made due to the lack of resources and capacities and for geostrategic reasons. The Group of 77 and China therefore strongly supports the General Assembly's recent adoption of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa for the period 2016-2025, which could address the ways and means to ensure inclusive and sustainable industrialization as an engine for growth and provide another form of strategic leverage in support of the efforts of African countries.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the Group of 20 (G-20) Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the G-20 Initiative on Supporting Industrialization in Africa and Least Developed Countries, launched at the eleventh G-20 summit, held in Hangzhou, China, on 4 and 5 September, and looks forward to their implementation.

(*spoke in French*)

The Group of 77 and China welcomed the decision of the African Union to proclaim this year the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women. This underscores the African Union's acknowledgment of the importance of women and girls and of human development in general as the pillar and main vectors for the implementation of its Agenda 2063. It also corresponds to SDG 5, which emphasizes the essential role of women in the path towards sustainable development.

The Group of 77 and China recognizes the positive trends towards a lasting peace in Africa and also wishes to emphasize the need to create conditions conducive to sustainable peace. In this regard, there is always an urgent need to develop and strengthen human and institutional capacity, especially in countries emerging from conflict.

Besides the traditional threats to peace and security in Africa, newly emerging challenges — particularly that of terrorism — require continued international support. The Group of 77 and China therefore stresses the need for the United Nations system to support regional and subregional African organizations in their implementation of action plans against terrorism. On this issue, we are convinced of the crucial importance of the commitment of Member States to support African countries in achieving the objective of an Africa free of conflicts and to ending all wars in Africa by 2020.

Finally, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the role of the international community in the progress made in the fight against and prevention of malaria. According to the World Health Organization *2015 World Malaria Report*, the rate of incidence of malaria cases dropped by 42 per cent in Africa between 2000 and 2015. However, the majority of global malaria cases are in Africa. We welcome the World Health Organization Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 as a framework for continuing global efforts against the disease. We believe that increased international support

for the implementation of this framework will enable Africa to achieve its goals of eliminating malaria.

We also wish to reiterate the need for the United Nations system to provide assistance in the improvement of health-care systems and to ensure equal access to health care. This is because the health and well-being of the population are at the heart of inclusive and sustainable development.

Mr. Wafy (Niger): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of African States in today's important debate on the agenda items related to Africa. At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate and for your opening remarks.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his analytical and well-documented reports submitted under these agenda items, namely, the New Partnership for Africa's Development: fourteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support (A/71/189), the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/71/211), and the biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development (A/71/203). I also commend the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Maged Abdelaziz, for preparing these reports.

Over the past year, African countries continued to make progress on the priority areas set forth in the New Partnership for Africa's Development. This is most evident in the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. Improvement in project preparation and leveraging finance, including from the private sector and multilateral development banks, particularly the African Development Bank, have advanced the implementation of many of the projects approved in the 2014 Dakar Financing Summit for Africa's Infrastructure. The progress made on infrastructure development has contributed to boosting connectivity and enhancing regional integration, thereby building on the momentum created by the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area by States members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, and on the launch of the flagship projects in the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023), under Agenda 2063, including the African passport and free movement of peoples.

Similarly, other priority sectors, including agriculture, food security, education, training and health have seen varying degrees of progress. In particular, with respect to agricultural development, 50 African countries are now engaged in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, with 12 countries so far surpassing the target of allocating 10 per cent of their national budgets to agricultural development. However, these efforts are taking place despite the precariousness of current global economic conditions. The subdued demand for raw commodities, particularly from emerging economies, along with falling oil and other primary-commodity prices, has had a profoundly negative impact on Africa's total exports, which have declined by almost 30 per cent. In addition, there has been a decline of 7 per cent in foreign direct investment flows, thus affecting the growth rates and social expenditures of most African countries.

The foregoing conditions speak to the urgency of making progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023). Indeed, the global and continental agendas place strong emphasis on regional integration, structural economic transformation and enhancing productive capacity, industrialization and agribusiness in order to further expand opportunities for economic participation, including for women and young people, and to create an enabling environment for poverty eradication and socioeconomic transformation.

In that regard, Africa attaches great importance to promoting synergies, building complementarities and ensuring a coherent and integrated implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. That is why Africa has embarked on an important process to incorporate the goals and targets of those global and continental frameworks to national and regional development plans.

In addition, a solid structure for rigorous follow-up and review at the national, regional and continental levels was established. This structure recognized both the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue at the local and national levels and the critical role of the

Regional Economic Communities in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, including by promoting peer learning and sharing experiences. International support for these endeavours is more urgent than ever, particularly for strengthening the capacities of data systems to track progress and identify implementation gaps. The African Group believes that the United Nations monitoring mechanism can provide important input to this structure as well as to the follow-up and review structures at the global level, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Our greatest challenge in achieving a people-centred vision of development agendas and realizing their promise of leaving no one behind is the mobilization of adequate means for their implementation. A revitalized global partnership for development is therefore an indispensable ingredient to success. In this regard, I wish to commend the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for his analytical and advocacy work to promote Africa's development priorities and for making effective partnerships the thematic focus of Africa Week 2016.

Indeed, Africa's strategic partnerships with traditional, new and emerging partners and with the United Nations system must be streamlined and adjusted to avoid the shortcomings of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and support the broader vision of the 2030 Agenda. These partnerships must be aligned to Africa's development priorities identified in the African Union Agenda 2063 and address the gap in the implementation of commitments made towards Africa's development. The biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development gives us a clear picture of the implementation gap that is threatening the fulfilment of the commitments pertaining to the four thematic topics, namely, infrastructure development, trade, a conflict-free Africa, and gender equality and women's empowerment.

While recognizing the efforts of the African countries and their development partners in fulfilling their commitments in those thematic areas, much more needs to be done on the basis of the principles of partnership and mutual accountability. Official development assistance and other commitments in the areas of finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and market access must be fulfilled in a timely manner. Commitments made to the Green Climate Fund must also be honoured so as to help African countries build resilience in the face of the devastating effects of climate change.

The African Group welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", which provides a succinct overview of recent major peace and security developments on the continent, and which highlights, in particular, the place of women's human rights in peace and security in Africa. The African Group takes note, with appreciation, of the progress made in preventing and resolving conflict in Africa and in building and consolidating peace in countries emerging from conflict, which collectively support achieving the goals set forth in the African initiative Silencing the Guns, Owning the Future by 2020.

In particular, Africa has also made significant progress in strengthening its institutional capacity, including its ability to undertake peace efforts and promote good governance, including through the African Peer Review Mechanism. The decision of African leaders at the twenty-seventh African Union (AU) Summit, held in Kigali, to set up an import levy to help fund the budget of the African Union, including 25 per cent of the budget of its peace and security activities, is a historic step towards full self-reliance and a sign of Africa's strong commitment to realizing the Africa We Want as detailed in the Agenda 2063. The revitalization of the African Peer Review Mechanism will provide a further boost to African efforts to prevent conflict through addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict.

At the same time, Africa continues to face serious challenges to its peace and security, including electoral violence, social and economic inequality and exclusion, especially of women and young people, and the rise of violent extremism and terrorism. African countries have taken numerous steps to address these challenges at national and regional levels, including, in the case of terrorism, the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Multinational Joint Task Force, to combat Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, respectively.

To complement and strengthen African efforts to address challenges to the continent's peace and security, it is critical that Africa's partners enhance their support for African peace and security activities and help build the continent's own capacity to prevent and resolve conflict through increased assistance for

the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU's Agenda 2063 provide us with unique and complementary blueprints to tackle conflicts in a holistic manner by integrating development, peace, security and human rights into one actionable framework. No country or organization can hope to meet these challenges alone. In recognition of this fact, the African Union and the United Nations have sought to strengthen their cooperation across the areas of peace, security, human rights and development. That is reflected in the Framework for a Renewed United Nations/AU Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agendas 2017-2027, adopted at the twenty-fifth African Union summit, held in Johannesburg in June 2015, and in the preparation of the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

Furthermore, we must also strive to enhance the collaboration between the United Nations and Africa in every area of conflict-prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development, as well as the promotion of good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. In that regard, we should draw on the recommendations of the major United Nations reviews undertaken in 2015 of its peace operations and peacebuilding architecture and of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including the need for fostering closer and more effective partnerships with regional organizations, particularly the African Union.

Lastly, with regard to making progress on implementing the aims of the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa, the African Group welcomes the commitment shown by world leaders under Sustainable Development Goal 3 to continue to work to eradicate malaria and other diseases. We underscore the importance of taking preventive measures, including the improvement of surveillance and reporting within the framework of the overall objective of strengthening the capacities of African countries' health systems to tackle malaria and other health issues.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in today's joint debate on the agenda items "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support" and on "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa". We thank the Secretary-General for his insightful reports, contained in documents A/71/189 and A/71/203, which provide a comprehensive overview of what has been achieved to date, as well as the challenges encountered and the work that remains to be done.

CARICOM would like to express its support once again for the African-led and African-owned approach to socioeconomic revival that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) represents. We note with satisfaction the progress that has been achieved in recent years, while recognizing that there are still many hurdles to be overcome before the goals set can be fully achieved. NEPAD has enabled Africans to chart their own course towards higher standards of living, surmount the ravages of conflict and poverty, and fulfil the rich promise of their boundless potential; the progress made thus far illustrates its effectiveness as a development model for Africa.

It is especially encouraging to learn that, despite the difficult global economic environment in 2015, the international community has continued to support NEPAD's implementation through financing, trade, debt relief and South-South cooperation. Indeed, the progress made in the areas of infrastructure development, trade, a conflict-free Africa, gender equality and women's empowerment is testimony to NEPAD's viability and provides strong justification for its continued international support. The initiatives being undertaken through NEPAD coincide with the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent, which is being observed from 2015 to 2024, in that it is a vehicle for taking effective measures to implement a programme of activities in a spirit of recognition, justice and development for people of African descent.

Earlier this week, we observed the International Day of the Girl Child, again highlighting the ambition for gender equality embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals. It was a solemn reminder that girls still face widespread disadvantages and discrimination on a daily basis. Against that backdrop, it is heartening to note in the Secretary-General's report that, where gender equality and women's empowerment are concerned, major legislative reforms have achieved

significant results in education, health and political participation. The report also indicates, however, that challenges remain for women in the areas of economic empowerment and human rights violations, as well as in gender disparities, violence against women and women's inadequate participation in peace processes. We urge that more aggressive action be taken in those critical areas.

On the health front, CARICOM is encouraged by the progress of recent years in the fight against malaria. The African Union reported on World Malaria Day 2016 that a good number of African countries had met the targets for ending malaria set in the Millennium Development Goals and that Africa had accounted for 60 per cent of the global drop in malaria-related deaths, with 6.2 million lives saved since 2000. CARICOM calls on the international community to renew its commitment to supporting Africa and other affected regions in fighting that preventable disease. We endorse the Secretary-General's assessment that building sustainable health systems capable of meeting current and future threats, such as that of Ebola, is key to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all Africans.

Climate change remains a major threat to sustainable development in Africa, given the continent's vulnerability to environmental and climatic events. Against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the African Union's Agenda 2063, CARICOM urges African countries and their development partners to heed the Secretary-General's call to work towards incorporating those mainstream agendas into their national development frameworks, as their effective implementation will help to realize NEPAD's priorities.

The Secretary-General's report identifies two major challenges to realizing NEPAD's objectives — first, a lack of adequate financial support, and secondly, the severe institutional and technical capacity constraints, at the country level, in the African Union and in the regional economic communities, that prevent effective implementation in all four of NEPAD's thematic areas. CARICOM is of the view that the significant improvements that are being recorded in the areas to which adequate resources have been channelled justify the provision of further support. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that the full realization of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 will require concerted efforts by both African countries and the international community.

A supportive international environment is critical to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, including through official development assistance, foreign direct investment, trade and debt relief, and in that regard, as I said, we are pleased to note that the international community's support has continued. We join with the Secretary-General in urging African countries, together with their development partners, to continue to take measures to strengthen the basis for growth while promoting social policies aimed at addressing poverty and inequality, in line with the 2030 Agenda's vision of ensuring that no one is left behind.

CARICOM also supports the call made at the 2015 African Union Summit in Johannesburg for the United Nations to further enhance its cooperation with the African Union, especially in the context of implementing the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti), Vice-President, took the Chair.

CARICOM reaffirms its commitment to continued collaboration with Africa in addressing common challenges to peace and development and in contributing together to a more prosperous and secure world. Our close interaction and collaboration within the United Nations and under the mechanisms of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States have helped to ensure a constant renewal of the fraternal bonds between our peoples and regions. We look forward to strengthening those ties even further in the years ahead. In that connection, I am pleased to report that CARICOM's decades-long relationship with Africa is being consolidated through a strengthened diplomatic presence in Africa, increased people-to-people ties and the pursuit of economic and technical cooperation for our mutual benefit.

In conclusion, the States members of the Caribbean Community would like to take this opportunity to express their renewed confidence in the prospects for Africa's continued progress and to reiterate our commitment to a strong partnership with Africa for the mutual benefit of our two fraternal regions.

Mr. Ismail (Brunei Darussalam): Before delivering my statement, I would like to express our deepest condolences and sympathies to our Thai colleagues on the passing yesterday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand on this very sad day. I would also like to express our sorrow on the passing of our dear friend and colleague Ambassador Girma Tesfay, Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on agenda item 62 on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as my own country, Brunei Darussalam.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211), which have provided us with valuable updates and practical recommendations on the way forward for Africa's development. We are encouraged by the fact that Africa continues to make economic strides, despite the slowdown in the global economy and the low commodity prices that have lowered growth projections for the continent. The signing in 2015 of an agreement on the Tripartite Free Trade Area has paved the way to an agreement on a continental free-trade area by 2017, which would boost intra-African trade and provide for more economic opportunities with the rest of the world.

As we work towards ASEAN's Community Vision 2025, there are many areas where ASEAN and Africa could cooperate so as to realize our shared aspirations for the development and future of our regions. Six decades after the Bandung Conference was held in 1955, its spirit continues to guide us in addressing issues of common concern on a basis of mutual respect and trust, in accordance with the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I would therefore like to express ASEAN's support for full and effective implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which will also provide a strong foundation for the Africa Union's Agenda 2063.

We note the good progress that many of the African Member States have made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As we embark on our journey to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is vital that we continue to work together to collectively reach those global goals. In that regard, ASEAN continues to encourage NEPAD's efforts to prioritize health, education and gender mainstreaming on their agenda. We also welcome the valuable contribution of the African Peer Review Mechanism to strengthening engagement between Governments and their peoples.

We realize that it is difficult to achieve progress and development without durable peace. The growing threats of terrorism and violent extremism and the existence of protracted armed conflicts stunt development. That is why we continue to have faith in NEPAD's programmes, particularly those aimed at developing human capital in order to promote peace, security and prosperity.

In conclusion, ASEAN would like to reiterate its solidarity with and support for the endeavours of our African friends and the international community to achieve greater progress in implementing the NEPAD agenda for the benefit of Africa.

Mr. McCulley (United States of America): President Obama spoke of the centrality of Africa during a speech on 24 September to the United States-Africa Business Forum. He said that with so many of the key challenges we face — our security, our prosperity, climate change, the struggle for human rights and human dignity and the reduction of conflict — Africa is essential to our progress.

Africa's rise is important not just to Africa but to the entire world. That is why the United States appreciates the holistic, comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) represents. NEPAD's four programmes of work articulate a clear and compelling plan of action for sustainable development in Africa, covering as it does natural resources, governance and food security; regional integration, infrastructure and trade; industrialization, science, technology and innovation; and human capital development, youth employment and women's empowerment.

We are proud supporters of NEPAD's vision, and many of the foreign assistance programmes and partnerships of the United States are providing

concrete assistance in Africa that helps to advance all of NEPAD's work programmes. For example, our Feed the Future programme focuses on increasing crop yields, which in turn result in higher incomes, improved nutrition, enhanced food security and stronger economies. In 2015 alone, Feed the Future helped more than 3.6 million African farmers gain access to new tools and technologies, such as high-yield crops and seeds, fertilizer application tools and best practices in soil conservation and water management. Those and other efforts helped farmers supported by Feed the Future realize more than $450 million in new agricultural sales that same year.

In the area of energy security, our Power Africa programme is mobilizing billions of dollars in investment from Government and businesses in order to reduce the number of Africans living without electricity. Power Africa's 120 private- and public-sector partners have committed more than $43 billion, including more than $31 billion from private-sector partners alone. After three years of operation, Power Africa has helped to facilitate private-sector power transactions that are expected to generate 4,600 megawatts of new, cleaner power. Similarly, the contributions of the United States to the Green Climate Fund are financing projects that will help developing countries mitigate and improve their resilience to the effects of climate change, including projects in the Gambia, Mali, Malawi, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. In order to better serve least-developed countries, the project process has been streamlined to improve funding access, and $3 million per country has been allocated to support the formulation of national climate-change adaptation plans.

The United States is also investing in comprehensive health programmes aimed at preventing and treating diseases. For example, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), launched in 2005, provided for a historic $1.2 billion expansion of United States Government resources to fight malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. Last year alone, PMI protected more than 16 million people through the spraying of homes and procured more than 42 million long-lasting insecticide-treated bednets, almost 60 million anti-malarial treatments and more than 54 million rapid diagnostic tests.

Good governance is a central tenet of United States foreign assistance. As President Obama has noted, nothing will unlock Africa's economic potential more than ending the cancer of corruption. The United States leadership, in establishing the Open Government Partnership (OGP), has increased transparency, bolstered citizen engagement and harnessed new technologies to improve good governance, transparency and accountability. In September, South Africa concluded its one-year tenure as lead Government OGP Chair, and we are grateful for its leadership. During the year, South Africa hosted an Africa regional meeting, bringing together members of OGP Governments and civil society from across the continent to exchange best practices. It also co-hosted the OGP five-year anniversary event on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly.

Ensuring that the OGP plays a meaningful role in broadening the fight against corruption in pivotal African countries such as its newest member, Nigeria, and in advancing transparent implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, will be a key priority going forward. The United States is pleased that the OGP steering committee recently endorsed a new partnership with NEPAD, and looks forward to strong collaboration in advancing work on the continent.

Finally, gender equality is a core component of United States foreign assistance. Years of experience have taught us that greater gender equality means better outcomes for everyone, and that when we invest in women and girls we see a direct benefit to their potential as individuals, as well as related improvements in their families, communities and entire societies. The United States is fully committed to promoting gender equality through partnerships such as Let Girls Learn, which helps adolescent girls complete their education and pursue their broader aspirations. The Obama administration's holistic approach to girls' education includes investments of more than $1 billion in new and ongoing programming by the United States Government in more than 50 countries, and nearly 100 private-sector partnerships for promoting the education of adolescent girls around the world.

We look forward to continuing our work with the African Union and the Governments and peoples of Africa as equal partners, in the efforts to make the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 a reality.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211) on today's agenda items.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In Cuba's view, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is unquestionably one of the most commendable initiatives launched in Africa in recent decades, based on principles that reflect the commitment of the region's political leaders to making political, economic and social progress on the continent.

The Secretary-General's report on NEPAD (A/71/189) takes account of the economic and social transformations that Africa has been undergoing. However, we must recognize that the road to sustainable development continues to present challenges. In many cases, a chronic lack of resources for public investment is an obstacle to full implementation of NEPAD's development plans. Where international trade is concerned, African countries face numerous structural hindrances to their access to global markets. The lack of financing for trade and the presence of tariff and non-tariff barriers in developed countries' markets, including subsidies that distort trade, continue to prevent Africa from achieving its export potential.

The continuing decline in official development assistance (ODA) is another cause for concern about development initiatives in Africa. That decline and the unfavourable world economic conditions during the period under consideration present a true challenge for the implementation for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union 2063 Agenda and endanger the progress already made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. We call upon all developed countries to comply with their ODA commitments and step up their support for NEPAD.

Cuba has always defended the historical and moral responsibility of the international community to help African development in the wake of centuries of colonialism, looting and siphoning off of African wealth. For some, Africa continues to be merely a myth and a veritable mine of resources, a place where they can obtain substantial profits without paying a high cost and without suffering the disastrous consequences that have plagued the African people as a result of this centuries-long process of exploitation and pillage. To take care of African problems, we must get rid of that philosophy of profit and plunder at any cost, which underpins the unfair international economic order that has been forced upon the world.

Not only does Africa continue to be marginalized and completely disadvantaged in international economic relations, but its levels of poverty are continuing to grow at an alarming rate, and it is experiencing increased armed conflict and the spread of diseases that are decimating entire nations on the African continent. The cause of this has been the economic and financial policies and the unbridled waves of privatization accompanying the neoliberal globalization process imposed by the developed countries. It is these policies and this privatization, which were supposed to make the situation in Africa less precarious, and not the weaknesses of African institutions — as the developed countries want us to believe — that are to blame.

As the Secretary-General's report on NEPAD states, the 2030 Agenda, in which the specific problems of Africa are recognized, began to be implemented in 2015 and the importance of supporting the 2063 Agenda and NEPAD was reaffirmed. Both Agendas share similar strategic principles, with a focus on people, peace, justice, human rights, prosperity, environmental sustainability and mutually accountable partnerships. Cuba firmly believes that, in the context of NEPAD, the African leaders will be able to resolve the conflicts that currently present additional obstacles to achieving the economic and social development goals of the region.

The people of Cuba are direct and natural heirs of the gallantry, courage and spirit of endurance of Africa, which has struggled heroically for centuries to overcome countless challenges. We are proud of that. Africa is very dear to our hearts in Cuba — it is an essential part of what Cubans are. It informs our identity and our culture; many Cubans have their roots in Africa. Thanks to the profound international beliefs of the Cuban Revolution, our country has always shown solidarity with Africa, whether in the form of unconditional support for anti-colonialist struggles or through cooperation projects in many spheres of economic and social development.

In the context of South-South cooperation, our country continues to provide its human capital and experience in its cooperation with African countries. Allow me to mention a few prime examples of that cooperation. More than 2,600 African fellowship-holders are studying subjects at universities in Cuba, including medical science. More than 5,000 Cuban cooperation workers are serving in 34 African nations in order to boost development in diverse areas, including public health, education, agriculture, sports and

construction. More than 27,000 African patients have recovered their sight through a joint Cuban-Venezuelan programme known as Operation Miracle.

And Africa has always shown solidarity with Cuba. In the more than 50 years since the economic, commercial and financial blockade was first imposed on my country, the Governments and peoples of Africa have closed ranks in support of the Cuban people's right to decide their own destiny.

Cuba has always been supportive of the African continent in its quest to eradicate malaria by means of the vector control programme, including the construction of biolarvicide production factories in Africa, staff development initiatives, the training of community workers and informal educational discussions on environmental sanitation. The malaria control programme has borne fruit: it has reduced infant and maternal mortality rates, which is an important result when we bear in mind that 90 per cent of malaria-related deaths occur in Africa and that most of the victims are children under 5 years old. Cuba will continue to help the African continent to eradicate the epidemic.

Our country will continue to support the African Union and all the regional coordination mechanisms in the quest to find African solutions to African problems. It will continue to advocate respect for the sovereignty of the African continent and non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries. We hope that the General Assembly will tackle the true root causes of the challenges facing the continent, which are the result of decades of colonization and plundering. African countries urgently need special and differential treatment, market access for their products, stable commodity prices, external debt forgiveness, access to technologies, significantly increased ODA and adequate financial resources for their purposes, which must be provided without interference or preconditions. Africa cannot wait any longer. Let us act now.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to speak on the agenda items under consideration. We have taken note of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211) and his recommendations. We welcome the progress made in implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development and all the achievements with regard to security, food security, development, the rule of law, education and the empowerment of women in Africa.

I express my deep thanks to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations for the rich debate and deliberations during Africa Week, which will lead to the economic and political development of Africa.

In 2015 we witnessed the adoption of two historic agendas: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union 2063 Agenda, which represents the long-term strategic vision for the transformation of Africa over the next 50 years. The first Ten-Year Implementation Plan was adopted in 2015. We believe that through synergy, the two Agendas will lead to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa and of all African development objectives. That has been reflected in the report (A/71/203) of the Secretary-General and the focus on the four thematic areas.

We would like to concentrate here on the major objectives: infrastructure development, trade, a conflict-free Africa, and gender equality and women's empowerment. We stress the major challenges facing the African continent, including the lack of financial support and the current worrisome economic situation, given the unfavourable global economic conditions. The report highlights the fact that African countries continue to face weak productivity in the agricultural sector. They are suffering from a lack of financing, unemployment and challenges resulting from climate change. We also would like to stress the areas of importance, namely, good governance, the rule of law, human rights and the empowerment of women.

Kuwait remains convinced of the importance of cooperation in all areas of development. We have provided assistance to developing countries, including the least developed among them, throughout the world, particularly in Africa, through our aid agencies. We base our policies on the conviction that assistance and cooperation will enable development projects to be carried out, thereby ensuring sustainable development for the benefit of such countries. My country will continue to support the aspirations of developing countries and those of African countries in particular. The sum total of contributions and assistance provided by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development has amounted to $6.4 billion.

We are very proud of our historical relations with African countries. We enjoy observer status in the African Union. In November 2013, we hosted the

third Africa-Arab Summit on the theme "Partners in development and investment". We also provided concessionary loans as part of our commitment to African countries. We will hand over the chairmanship of the Summit to Mauritania prior to the fourth Summit, which will be held in Malabo in November. We will confer awards in the area of health for 2015 and that of food security for 2016. We will continue to maintain our policy of cooperation on the basis of our deeply held conviction of the need to support quality education and combat illiteracy in Africa.

In conclusion, we reiterate our steadfast commitment to all the aspirations and hopes of African countries to achieve sustainable development in the continent.

Mr. Kononuchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me congratulate the African Union and the United Nations system on a successful Africa Week. The activities held during the event have clearly shown the enormous potential and desire of the countries of Africa to achieve sustainable development. They have already gone far in implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

However, the continent remains vulnerable to various types of challenges, including terrorism, separatism, an imperfect public health system, soil degradation and the unsustainable use of water. It is therefore important to ensure an appropriate level of support for Africa so as to strengthen the positive momentum and help the African countries embark on an irreversible path of progress in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are of the view that African countries must, independently and without pressure imposed upon them from abroad, make decisions with regard to strategy and tactics to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in line, on the one hand, with their own national priorities, and, on the other, with the collective regional vision of the future of the continent and its place and role in global politics and economics. In that regard, the Russian Federation welcomed the adoption of the African Union Agenda 2063, the key vectors of which are in line with the 2030 Agenda. We support the chorus of the African Union for a balanced and reasoned blending of the two agendas, which will help in their successful implementation.

We agree with the Secretary-General that there is a need to increase assistance to Africa with a view to eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequality, which taken together provide fertile ground for the emergence of conflicts. We call for vital focus to be placed on developing industrial production and transport infrastructure, strengthening trade potential and improving the public health and education systems. In that context, we supported the decision of the General Assembly at its seventieth session to launch a new Industrial Development Decade for Africa (see resolution 70/295).

We trust that African countries, for their part, will continue to update legislation, especially in the areas of finance, taxes and investments, with a view to mobilizing domestic resources and developing partnerships. For our part, we will continue to provide assistance to our African partners through bilateral and multilateral channels. We are prepared to use both traditional forms of assistance and look for new innovative ways for mutually advantageous cooperation.

Russia is actively helping to ease the debt burden of African States. To date, as part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, we have forgiven the main portion of Africa's debt of more than $20 billion. We grant wide-ranging trade preferences to African countries. Regarding African goods, we have a preferred customs and tariff regime covering a major portion of Russian imports from Africa.

Substantial support is given for the training of personnel. At present, we have more than 10,000 Africans studying in Russian higher educational institutions, more than 4,000 of whom are paid for from our federal budget. In the 2015/16 academic year sub-Saharan African States have received more than 1,000 scholarships. Russia contributes to international assistance programmes for Africa through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme (WFP). In 2014-2015, through WFP channels, we provided food aid to Somalia, Kenya, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia for a total of $10 million. To re-equip WFP's pool of vehicles in a number of African countries, Russia allocated Kamaz vehicles that were worth around $10 million.

Russia also provided African States with assistance in the health sector. Our country was one of the first to react to the Ebola virus epidemic in West African countries. To combat the virus, Russia allocated more than $60 million. We made a contribution of about $6.6 million to the fund of the International Civil

Defence Organization and earmarked it for purchase in Russia and delivery to Conakry and Monrovia of specialized medical modules, mobile medical warehouses and Kamaz vehicles.

Mr. Chenneerappa (India): We are meeting at a time of hope for multilateralism. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is under way and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will enter into force next month. In addition, Africa has separately commenced the first phase of implementing its own African Union Agenda 2063, which builds on the core priorities of the now 15-year-old New Partnership for Africa's Development. International collaboration remains crucial in assisting Africa move towards the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Africa has made rapid strides in recent years. Its overall economic output has grown. Poverty rates have fallen. Life expectancy has increased. Today Africa is a young continent. Rates of infant and maternal mortality have fallen. Primary school enrolment, including for girls, has increased. Malnutrition has been reduced and access to safe drinking water has increased. HIV infection and prevalence rates have been reversed. Foreign direct investment in sectors such as mining, has increased in recent years. Expanding mobile connectivity is leading to innovative money transfers.

We appreciate the organization of the ongoing Africa Week from 13 to 17 October, which provides a good opportunity to engage the entities of the United Nations systems on ways to further strengthen the institutional partnership as a means of effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. We congratulate the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and the Special Adviser on Africa on successfully focusing the attention of the international community on this matter.

The continuing challenges to development in Africa are well studied. Some of the critical constraints persist, including difficulties surrounding agricultural productivity; skill development; manufacturing capability; the current low commodity prices and slow economic growth; lack of diversification of economies; poor connectivity and infrastructure; limited regional integration; and rapid unplanned urbanization. Chronic armed conflicts for control over resources in certain regions of Africa also impede progress. The reliance on official development assistance continues to be high despite the declining levels of such aid from traditional donors, although collaboration with non-traditional donors is growing. There is wide economic disparity across the African continent. While Africa's combined gross domestic product (GDP) is $2.4 trillion, the top 10 economies of Africa account for nearly $2 trillion, while 34 countries have a GDP of less than $15 billion each and around 10 countries have a GDP of less than $2 billion each. Africa's trade is only 3 per cent of the global figure, and intra-Africa trade is a mere 12 per cent of that.

India and Africa represent one third of humanity. Our similar and shared experiences and struggles translate into a similar scale of challenges and concerns at the level of both national priorities and collective interests in an increasingly globalized world. India and Africa worked together to develop a common understanding of our core priorities for an inclusive economic growth to eradicate poverty and allocate adequate resources in the debates on SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

There are great synergies between the African Union's Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda and the focused priorities being pursued by the Government of India. The India-Africa strategic partnership seeks to address many of the challenges that the African Union and our African partners have identified. The core strengths of our development partnership are capacity-building, mobilizing financial support and the sharing of technical expertise. The partnership complements our rapidly growing trade and investment links.

We focus on programmes for poverty eradication; provision of affordable quality health care and education; generating employment opportunities; building access to modern and renewable energy services; infrastructure; and connectivity between resources and markets. Today Africa and India represent young and dynamic societies and economies that are intensifying their collaboration to achieve greater prosperity for their peoples.

Building on our bilateral engagements, India has initiated closer interaction with Africa's regional communities over the past three decades. Since the First India-Africa Forum Summit of 2008, more than 40,000 Indian scholarships have been taken up by our African friends to participate in more than 300 different training programmes at 40 specialized institutions in a number of areas. They include information technology,

renewable energy, agriculture, marine and aeronautical engineering, marine hydrography, entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises, rural development, parliamentary affairs, logistics and management, climate-change adaptation, disaster management, cybersecurity, forensic sciences and defence and security.

In the past decade, India has approved almost $9 billion in concessional credit for nearly 140 projects in more than 40 African countries, with special emphasis on partners that are least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States. The areas have included power generation and distribution, water supply and irrigation, agriculture, light manufacturing, renewable energy, construction of infrastructure, and so forth. At the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, held last October, India offered an additional $100 billion in concessional credit on more attractive terms than in the past, a further 50,000 scholarships and grants-in-aid of $600 million over the next five years.

India was among the first emerging economies to offer a duty-free market access scheme for LDCs. In 2014, that unilateral scheme was further expanded and now extends to 34 African countries and is aimed at increasing their exports to India. Africa-India trade multiplied twentyfold in the last 15 years and doubled in the last five years to reach nearly $72 billion last year, making India the fourth largest trading partner for Africa. Indian foreign direct investment in Africa has also surged, with major investments having taken place in the telecommunications, information technology (IT), energy, engineering, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and automobile sectors. Some Indian financial institutions and infrastructure companies have also collaborated with the African Development Bank to facilitate project development efforts.

India has actively worked with international partners and the United Nations to collectively address the challenges posed by pandemics, including HIV/AIDS and the Ebola virus in Africa, including through affordable quality generic medicines. Our flagship programmes of telemedicine and tele-education have helped expand access to education and health to people in remote areas. India's experience of using IT tools for wide-ranging e-governance aspects for greater reach, transparency, accountability and financial inclusion, including the provision of a unique identity for over one billion people, can be of interest in the African context.

India has also offered to assist Africa in the use of space technology for multiple development uses, including crop inventory, drought assessment and monitoring, water resources management, forestry and the environment, locust early-warning, infrastructure development and disaster management. Those specialized real-time IT and space-technology solutions can greatly assist Governments in the planning and monitoring of the various development projects leading to the implementation of the SDGs.

Besides the wide-ranging development and humanitarian assistance efforts, India also partners with Africa in promoting peace and security through its long-standing contribution to United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Recent initiatives have also included trilateral cooperation, along with the United States of America, to offer training for Africa in United Nations peacekeeping.

The long-standing India-Africa partnership is based on solidarity and mutual respect; it is neither prescriptive nor exploitative. It represents South-South cooperation in all its dimensions and continues to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063.

Mr. Roet (Israel): First, I would like to convey my condolences for the untimely death of His Excellency Mr. Girma Asmerom Tesfay, the late Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations. He was not only a colleague here in the Hall, he was also a colleague in our building, and I remember vividly meeting him many times a week. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to the people of Eritrea and to the Permanent Mission of Eritrea.

Before I begin, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Maged Abdelaziz and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for their commitment to promoting peace and development in Africa. We were delighted to have Under-Secretary-General Abdelaziz join us at the special event entitled "Israeli Innovation and Technologies in Africa", which our Prime Minister hosted during the high-level general debate.

Africa has taken great strides toward better prosperity in the past few decades, despite the many challenges the continent faces. Those achievements were made possible by our working together to foster economic and social development and to establish stability in the region. Israel's first Prime Minister,

David Ben-Gurion, once said, "It's not enough to be up to date. You have to be up to tomorrow."

When Israel looks at its African neighbours today, we see the incredible development that has occurred thus far, but more importantly, the immense potential and hope for an even better tomorrow. The African continent is blessed with vast natural resources, such as oil, gold, diamonds and metals, but the greatest and most precious resource of all is its human capital, the people of Africa. An African proverb tells us that "Where there are many, nothing goes wrong". Well, there are many people living in Africa, over 1.2 billion men and women. But Africa is rich, not only because of its raw materials, but because of its raw talent. The trick is to find the keys to unlock that talent. Israel has been doing just that very successfully with its own population since its inception, and we are currently fostering both old and new partnerships with African States and sharing our methods and knowledge with them.

Israel shares a special historical connection with Africa that dates all the way back to biblical times when trade relations were established between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon in Jerusalem — yes, the same Jerusalem that was mentioned yesterday during the vote in UNESCO when the connection of Jews to Jerusalem was put into doubt. Israel respects the deep feelings of Christianity and Islam towards Jerusalem. We need to have the same special understanding and respect for Israeli ties to Jerusalem.

In later years, both our peoples overcame many similar challenges that fostered shared values which fuel our relationships to this day. Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said it best:

> "[Like Africa]... we had shaken off foreign rule; like them, we had to learn for ourselves how to reclaim the land, how to increase the yields of our crops, how to irrigate... how to live together and how to defend ourselves."

Our common struggles continue even now, as both Africa and Israel combat terrorism, cope with instability in our regions and strive every day for peace and prosperity.

There is no doubt that African nations have the primary responsibility for their social and economic development. After all, the New Partnership for Africa's Development is all about African nations forging an Africa future together. But we live in an age of globalization, connecting us all more profoundly than ever before, and we, the international community, have a joint obligation to develop our world together and to create a better future for our children together. As we decided in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, no one gets left behind. Driven by the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*, which means "reparing the world", Israel strives to help make this world a better place. We are ready to cooperate with our African friends in development efforts in any way we can, whether in agriculture, health, water, irrigation, tourism, cybersecurity and the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation.

This past July, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a historic trip to Africa, during which he declared his intention to return to the continent very soon. Those trips mark a new phase for the Israel-Africa relationship. Although Israel is not technically a part of Africa, we feel we are spiritually and geographically linked, now more than ever. As the Prime Minister said in his speech, "Israel is coming back to Africa and Africa is coming back to Israel".

Last month, Prime Minister Netanyahu hosted a special event on Israeli innovation and technologies in Africa, here at the United Nations, at which African leaders from over 17 countries were introduced to Israeli technologies that will help to shape the future. As an example, an Israeli company, called WaterGen, demonstrated technology that creates an abundant and renewable source of fresh, clean drinking water, extracted directly from the air, without the need for any special infrastructure, save a small amount of electricity. Imagine that — fresh water pulled out of thin air. Another Israeli company called Energiya Global has developed affordable solar projects worldwide, including in Africa, that provide clean electricity to millions of people and strive to minimize the world's dependence on fossil fuels by creating alternate sources of clean, safe and renewable energy.

Israel is interested in creating partnerships with Africa through both the private and public sectors. Mashav, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, has been active throughout the developing world since the late 1950s, assisting countries in alleviating hunger, disease and poverty through technical training and technology transfer, while encouraging self-reliance and innovation. In partnership with Germany, Mashav also launched the Africa Initiative, with the purpose of addressing pressing

global challenges in Africa, such as the eradication of poverty and hunger, food security, climate change and more, in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

Long-term development and prosperity cannot truly be achieved without stability. That applies to Africa as well. Unfortunately, one of the biggest threats we face today is terrorism. Israel has had to deal with its fair share of terrorism throughout its history. We have come to learn that such threats must be fought constantly and without pause. At the same time, it is vitally important that we never give up on the development of our people and our nation. Global terrorism is a threat to every country, in Africa and throughout the world, and the only way to overcome it and restore stability is if we work together. It is essential that we recognize that the fight against terrorism goes hand in hand with the pursuit of prosperity. Israel is ready and willing to stand with its African neighbours and other partners to eliminate that threat by sharing our knowledge and experience and by working to eradicate terrorism in all of its forms.

Theodor Herzl, Israel's founding father, said "Where there is a will there is a way." His words are used in Israel to this day — they push us forward and encourage us to reach for the seemingly unreachable. Today, with our joint knowledge, technology and resources, the eradication of extremism and the achievement of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are more than attainable. Together, the countries sitting here in this room today have turned the SDGs into a reality. Together, we have decided to tackle the many new challenges we face. Together, we have decided to make the world a better place for our children and grandchildren. And together, here, today, we embrace the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. Ayoko (Nigeria): At the outset, my delegation expresses appreciation to the Secretary-General for his insightful reports on this agenda item (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211). Nigeria endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of the Niger, on behalf of the African Group.

Without a doubt, Africa is transforming. Over a decade ago, African leaders demonstrated strong political will and determination by adopting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the African-owned, African-designed and African-led development strategy for the continent's renewal. As one of the five founding countries of NEPAD, Nigeria is very proud to be associated with the agenda for change in Africa.

Since 2001, Africa has witnessed unprecedented progress in political and socioeconomic development at the national and regional levels. However, huge challenges still remain regarding peace and security, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. My delegation is concerned that the ongoing global economic downturn could reverse the changing narrative coming out of Africa. The slow economic recovery worldwide may hinder the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. My delegation therefore strongly believes that unless urgent action is taken, individually and collectively, Africa will continue to struggle to overcome extreme poverty, youth unemployment and pervasive social inequalities.

It is in that context that we urge the United Nations and development partners to increase their support for the implementation of sustainable development in Africa. What we need is partnerships, not aid. Stronger partnerships will certainly change the African landscape by helping us to record solid performance in the areas of macroeconomic stability, enhanced capacity development, results-based South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and increased intra-African trade, and, most importantly, that of silencing guns by 2020 for durable peace and good governance in Africa.

In particular, my delegation urges the global community to partner with NEPAD, as the flagship programme of the African Union, in consolidating the gains of the past decade. Specifically, international support for NEPAD should be aligned with Africa's defined development priorities and interests. The continent's growth trajectory could be further enhanced with critical investments in NEPAD-inspired sector programmes in agriculture and infrastructure. To that end, Nigeria calls for the accelerated implementation of the projects under the AU Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the AU Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

The nexus between peace and development is self-evident, and Nigeria believes that the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

would facilitate the continent's active participation in the global economy and promote regional economic cooperation and integration. In that regard, we stress that good governance remains a strategic goal for the security, stability and prosperity of the continent. Nigeria will continue to support the bold initiative of the African Peer Review Mechanism, which remains an invaluable asset in the continent's transformative vision and agenda for good governance.

We call upon the international community to support African efforts to strengthen Africa's capacity to address the root causes of conflict and to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner. Furthermore, we stress the need for the United Nations system to support African regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of counter-terrorism action plans.

For Nigeria, NEPAD remains the embodiment of Africa's development aspirations and the flagship programme of action for Africa to advance by means of inclusive growth and structural industrialization. Its programme of work is geared towards finding durable regional solutions to domestic development challenges. We believe that NEPAD is as relevant and fundamental to Africa's development aspirations today as it was at its establishment in 2001.

The Government of Nigeria continues to support the overriding goal of NEPAD to place African countries, individually and collectively, on the path to sustainable growth and development. It appreciates the emphasis NEPAD has placed on effective partnerships for charting the course of Africa's development. Closely linked to that central theme in NEPAD is the notion that smart partnerships inspire and consolidate African ownership and leadership. NEPAD has demonstrated that with effective programme planning and coordination, the implementation of regional and continental projects is attainable.

NEPAD has consistently demonstrated that political leadership can deliver the necessary guidance and can steer implementation policy to enable change. Nigeria commends the constructive work of NEPAD in the priority area of human capital development, particularly as it relates to skills acquisition; youth and women empowerment; and industrialization, science, technology and innovation. In the same vein, we encourage NEPAD to scale its results-based delivery in consideration of regional integration, natural resource governance and food security.

We applaud the accomplishments of NEPAD in setting multidimensional sector priorities to boost State capacity and revitalize the African renewal. The Nigerian Government will continue to support and play an active role in the strategic facilitation and coordination of regional and continental priority programmes, especially in the AU Presidential Infrastructure Champions Initiative.

The African transformation is also evident in the social development sector. The 2015 World Health Organization (WHO) report indicates a dramatic decline in the global malaria burden over the past 15 years. Without a doubt, much work remains to be done, and many countries in Africa continue to experience challenges in rolling back malaria. As a result, they are falling short of national and international targets. As the global community progresses with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the pursuit of malaria elimination, there is an ongoing need for the United Nations system, and especially the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030, to assist in addressing weak health systems and inequitable access to health services, and to increase domestic and international financing in Africa. The experience of combating the Ebola virus disease could be replicated in fighting other public health challenges.

In conclusion, Nigeria reiterates its firm support for and commitment to the mandates of the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, NEPAD, led by Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. We also appreciate the support of all United Nations agencies in strengthening the institutional capacity of NEPAD. We urge that more be done for Africa's development.

Africa should not be left behind, in any circumstance. At the very heart of NEPAD is the core objective of halting the marginalization of Africa in the international arena. We must be careful to ensure that the changing global dynamics do not leave Africa stranded or sidelined as a spectator. It is vital that Africa play an influential role in effective international development cooperation. I assure the Assembly that Nigeria will continue to work for an Africa that is integrated, united, peaceful, strong and resilient, in order to boost the prosperity of its people and society.

Mr. Annakou (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General for his

reports on the agenda items under consideration (A/71/189, A/71/203 and A/71/211). I also wish to thank Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Africa, and Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), for their efforts to support the African continent.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of the Niger on behalf of the African Group.

This plenary meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is being held one year after the leaders of the world adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set 17 goals and 169 targets and gave the assurance that no one would be left behind. The meeting is extremely important because, in discussing NEPAD, we are moving from words to actions and from planning to implementation at the international level, in keeping with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

As regards Africa, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want is a 50-year agenda that is designed to transform Africa into a continent of peace and security. Additionally, there is a 10-year implementation plan, which was adopted by the twenty-fifth African Union Summit, held in South Africa, in January 2015.

It is important to coordinate the relevant plans of action, particularly the 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. We must move immediately to make these programmes operational and to implement them. NEPAD has a key role to play in ensuring coherence between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in reaching goals and targets at the national level, taking into account the religious and cultural specificities of the countries of the continent. Coordination and integration are both important in the African continent and are only possible through integrated implementation, first at the national level and in various geographical areas of Africa and then among the different regions. Only thus can we ensure the full integration of the continent.

Despite all the efforts made and the progress achieved with the help of our partners, the continent continues to face many challenges in the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda, including high levels of unemployment, quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in education, a lack of basic services such as drinking water and electricity, and weak infrastructure. It is vital that developed countries comply with their pledges to African countries and support them in spurring economic growth and attracting investment. Such support should include private-sector initiatives to facilitate technology transfers, especially in the areas of food security, infrastructure, human resources and the acquisition by youth and women of skills that will enable them to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.

As regards peace and security, several States — including my own — are unfortunately embroiled in armed conflict. There is a close relationship between security and development; one cannot be achieved without the other. Therefore, institutional cooperation with the African Union needs to be strengthened if we are to prevent conflicts, maintain peace and deal with post-conflict situations. Human rights must be protected and disarmament imposed so as to ensure democracy, the rule of law and good governance and ensure economic stability in Africa.

Despite security issues in my country, the lack of stability and our stalled economy and development, Libya is committed to continuing its cooperation with African States, once its economic health has been restored, under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, so as to achieve peace and prosperity through joint action and the implementation of agreements. We feel that the phenomenon of illicit migration must be dealt with using solutions that address the root causes, in particular development, in the countries of origin, so that those countries can receive their people back, truly develop and use the transfer of technology to enhance capacities.

Finally, let me say that a number of developing countries, particularly in Africa and including Libya, are suffering from a serious brain drain and the illicit drain of capital to other countries. States, particularly those to which those assets have been funnelled, must therefore cooperate in recovering that wealth and returning it to the countries of origin, so that the latter can use the capital to modernize their infrastructure.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to convey our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Eritrea following the

death of our brother and colleague, Ambassador Girma Asmerom Tesfay. May God have mercy on his soul.

My delegation would like to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of Thailand and the Niger on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Group of African States, respectively.

My delegation is pleased to participate in this important meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the sustainable development of Africa, which represents the culmination of Africa Week this year. This debate, which is taking place one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provides a welcome opportunity to consider the best means for achieving sustainable development and stability in Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay special homage to Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, for the outstanding organization of Africa Week and for all of his and his Office's tireless and selfless efforts to advance the interests of Africa within the United Nations system and elsewhere. I am also pleased to congratulate Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki, the new Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and I wish him well and good luck in carrying out his mandate.

The Millennium Development Goals have given a significant boost to African countries and enabled them to achieve remarkable progress in the area of economic and social development. Despite that progress, the continent still faces numerous challenges capable of slowing its growth and development. Our priority should be to strengthen commitments to African development in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the African continent. In that context, the special needs of Africa's development should receive due attention in the framework of the implementation of the new 2030 Agenda. Broadening the base of the partnership for African development is an absolute necessity, if we want Africa to meet the SDGs by 2030.

The transformation of African economies through industrialization and the strengthening of their production capacity, as well as through the promotion of economic growth, have been decisive factors in lifting millions of Africans out of poverty, combating youth unemployment and empowering African women. Encouraging investment, developing infrastructure and improving market access and technology transfer are key components in enabling the economic emergence of African countries.

We believe that strengthening the African private sector will contribute to the diversification of African economies, enhancing added value and creating employment, income and opportunities. We note, moreover, that pledges made in connection with official development assistance, which remains a significant source for financing development, especially for African least developed countries, must be honoured.

African countries have shown a strong commitment to promoting stability and peace as drivers and catalysts, as well as absolutely essential preconditions, for development. Economic development can be achieved only in a context in which peace and stability predominate. Moreover, the increase in terrorism and violent extremism in several areas of Africa is likely to compromise development and security efforts in our continent. We therefore call on the international community to provide integral support to African countries, so that peace and development can mutually reinforce each other. As our colleague from Libya just stated, there is no peace without development and there will be no development without peace, stability and security. We wish to point out that the partnership with African countries should not jeopardize their national ownership and should respect their national priorities and development strategies.

Climate change is a major challenge facing the development of Africa and requires global solutions in order to mitigate its effects and support adaptation efforts through adequate funding and technology transfer. African countries, which contribute the least to the phenomenon of climate change, are among those that suffer most from its negative impact. Climate-change financing will be of critical importance, so that development in African countries can be sustainable.

Morocco welcomes the achievement of the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will serve as the cornerstone of the global framework to combat climate change in the coming years. The twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 22), which has been dubbed the COP of Action, is to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 7 to 18 November, and will present an opportunity to initiate actions and initiatives aimed at turning the Paris Agreement into a reality. One initiative, among

others, pertains to adapting agriculture in Africa with a view to improving production based on sustainability.

Morocco has always viewed South-South cooperation as one of the pillars of its foreign policy, especially with regard to African countries. Morocco remains convinced that only an African joint action, based on a shared commitment and strong regional integration, will enable African countries to overcome the challenges associated with sustainable development, peace and security.

In that spirit, Morocco has launched partnership and cooperation programmes with African countries in many areas, such as education, health care, infrastructure, agriculture and vocational training. In addition to the cooperation initiated by the Moroccan Government, Moroccan private companies have also increased their investments and presence in the continent in key development sectors, such as air and sea transportation, banking, housing, telecommunications, tourism and infrastructure projects.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Morocco is determined to commit itself to a more dynamic and active partnership at the international and regional levels for the development of our continent.

Mr. Gad (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its deep condolences for the loss of our colleague, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the Niger on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me to add a few points.

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for the reports on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (A/71/203, A/71/211, A/71/189), and the recommendations therein. My delegation would also like to express its thanks to the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for its ongoing efforts and for the excellent organization of Africa Week 2016, together with the comprehensive deliberations aimed at promoting development and stability in Africa.

Despite the relative improvement in the peace and security situation in Africa, some parts of the continent still suffer instability and threats to peace and security. That can be attributed to foreign interference in some cases and to the phenomenon of global terrorism in others. Nevertheless, other reasons, while positive in themselves, can also be responsible for the state of affairs that we are currently witnessing in Africa. They are related to the democratic process, in other words, free elections, the transfer of power and different constitutional systems; their existence indicates that there has been genuine development in the political life on the continent.

Against that backdrop, numerous efforts have been carried out on the continent over the past years to address and prevent various crises through the creation of structures for the maintenance of international and African peace and security, but also through the development of good-governance architecture to address various crises and strengthen and promote democratic principles. Africa has achieved progress in terms of establishing and maintaining peace and security. We can cite, for example, the role of the multinational African forces in combating the Boko Haram terrorist group in its attacks in the Lake Chad Basin region.

Africa is also facing major development challenges: poor human and institutional capacities and weak production and service sectors. That calls for more support for African efforts and for addressing the root causes of conflicts. Indeed, in 2013, Africa adopted its own development agenda, Agenda 2063. It was followed by the first 10-year implementation plan and the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement between the three regional economic communities, as well as ongoing efforts on the part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Alongside such regional economic developments, African countries actively participated in and contributed to the success of the international negotiations for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Plan and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, based on their conviction of the importance of supporting an international sustainable development agenda through global partnerships to promote regional efforts, as well as the efforts of NEPAD.

I would like to highlight the efforts over the past years to combat malaria in developing countries, in particular in Africa. We call on the international community to continue providing technical and financial support for the implementation of malaria-related prevention and treatment programmes and efforts. Africa remains convinced of the importance of working together with all of the international community's stakeholders to sustain and promote all efforts aimed at maintaining peace and security throughout the continent and to ensure sustainable development. Hence, there is a need to build strategic partnerships that are aligned with national priorities to accelerate development, in particular human development, and to deploy further diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing conflicts and developing resilience.

We believe that there is no sustainable development without peace and there is no peace without sustainable development. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved without adequate means of implementation and the mobilization of sufficient resources, including official development assistance and support from international financial institutions, and the promotion of South-South cooperation, efforts to combat illicit financial flows and good management of the natural resources in Africa. That all can be reinforced through the reform of the United Nations development system in order to provide the necessary support to all developing countries and in particular the least developed countries.

In conclusion, Egypt reaffirms that it will continue to spare no effort to boost cooperation at both the national and the international levels so as to meet the development aspirations of the African peoples and nations and create a peaceful, stable society.

Mr. Buhler (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to join previous speakers in expressing to the Secretary-General, on behalf of the French delegation, my sincere thanks for the three high-quality reports (A/71/203, A/71/211, A/71/189) that he has presented today to the General Assembly. The reports paint a very complete picture of the progress achieved in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and commitments made for development in Africa. They also make a significant contribution to the analysis of the causes of conflict and the efforts for peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The submission of those reports, which concluded Africa Week, which was full of interesting activities, was particularly welcome. With this year's theme of implementing Sustainable Development Goals, the General Assembly should act on the results of the historic international conferences held in 2015 on development and climate, which reflect a renewed commitment to international cooperation: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

With the adoption of the first 10-year plan for implementing Agenda 2063, which includes all of NEPAD's priorities, the African Union is showing its willingness to put Africa decisively on a new path for development. France welcomes the important work done by NEPAD and the efforts of African countries to implement the NEPAD programme in its various priority areas, including infrastructure development, agriculture, health, education, the environment, technology, innovation, women's empowerment and gender equality. Much progress has been made in showing that Africa is a continent full of promise for the future. We should welcome that.

But there are also significant challenges. Many obstacles and impediments are hindering development in Africa. I could talk about climate change, which affects the African continent in particular, especially the least-developed African countries. In that respect, the entry into force on 4 November of the Paris Agreement is good news for Africa, and I would like, once again, to underscore the key role played by the Secretary-General in achieving that Agreement, which some thought was impossible.

Other concerns should also be emphasized: problems related to forced migration on the continent, too many conflicts in the African theatre and the plague of terrorism. Efforts undertaken to address those challenges should be stressed. The reports presented today by the Secretary-General highlight many approaches for the future. France welcomes, in particular, the recommendations aimed at strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture in order to address the underlying causes of conflict and combat terrorism. We underscore our interest in measures recommended by the Secretary-General to strengthen the rights and the role of women as drivers of peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The obstacles to development are also due to a shortage of infrastructure on the continent. African Governments must also step up the reform of their national regulatory frameworks, promote regional infrastructure projects and do more to involve the local private sector. With African Governments, the international community must also redouble its efforts to mobilize additional resources, including innovative financing.

In stressing France's commitment to developing the African continent, the President of the French Republic launched, on 20 September, from the rostrum of the General Assembly, an appeal for Africa. He proposed a plan enabling all Africans to have access to electricity. Two thirds of Africans still do not have access to electricity, which is a major impediment to sustainable growth in Africa. He recalled his initiative for renewable energy in Africa, under which 10 donors have already pledged €10 billion by 2020. France will pay 20 per cent, or one fifth, of that amount. Today, I renew the call on Member States to join that effort.

The President of Republic also reiterated his commitment to continuing the fight against the three pandemics in Africa, in particular by maintaining the French contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the amount of €1.08 billion for the period of 2017 to 2019.

Mr. Sesay (Sierra Leone): The Sierra Leone delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his reports on the agenda item before us today (A/71/203 and A/71/211). We also extend our appreciation to the organizers of this event.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Niger on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively.

Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development. My delegation supports poverty eradication as the overarching objective of the post-2015 development agenda. But in order to achieve our goal, fast-tracking action is crucial. Poverty induces lots of suffering among people. It is our obligation to end that situation of suffering quickly. Talking is not enough. Action that gets resources and capacities to the poor is a moral obligation, and we must not allow such resources and capacities to get stuck in bureaucratic channels.

We must also ensure stability. Stability and peace are crucial for achieving our worthy development goals. Poverty is a form of instability. It is instability in the lives of the poor; it is instability and suffering in the lives of women and children; and it is instability that moves up to engulf whole societies. That is so because it makes it easy for its weaponization and misappropriation, resulting in the infliction of greater harm and insecurity on a society.

We believed that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ensured the most energetic anti-poverty push in human history. However, although Africa had fast-growing economies when the MDGs were being implemented, the continent lags behind in poverty reduction rates, food security, maternal and infant mortality, fragility, environmental degradation, gender inequality and youth unemployment. That is why the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should ensure a redoubling of efforts to achieve the yearnings that remained unfulfilled in the MDGs.

Sierra Leone had a weak start with the MDGs in 2000, emerging from a brutal civil war at the time. We had a mixed basket of outcomes. But this time around, we are determined to move on fast with actions. This is why we also see the SDGs as a recast of the country's development framework. Our agenda for prosperity and the SDGs are profoundly aligned. Sierra Leone was one of six African States among the 22 countries that were voluntarily reviewed during the Economic and Social Council high-level political forum in July this year. We shared our perspectives as to how we intend to implement the SDGs nationally, the challenges that we envisage as we move forward and how we wish to overcome them.

As we commence the second year of implementing the SDGs, it is imperative that we ensure "stateness". We must ensure that quality not only in terms of the central State, but also the local state and the State's service-delivery functions. In Sierra Leone, recovering State functions was emphasized after the civil war in the 1990s. Our current post-Ebola recovery programme prioritizes rebuilding the Government's delivery of services in the health, agriculture, education and other sectors.

The Government of Sierra Leone is determined and committed to further improving peace and security. We have moved from a country on the agenda of the Security Council to a nation that is a storehouse of

lessons on how to successfully move away from war to peace and development. As a signatory and pilot country of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, we pay great attention to domesticating SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

Our Government is keen to intensify the fight against corruption and promote good governance, accountability and transparency. We also urge accountability and transparency in institutions and mechanisms to support African countries. As we move ahead with the implementation of the SDGs that promote religious tolerance and coexistence as pillars of stability and development, we have all seen how entrepreneurs of conflict misappropriate the substance and symbolism of religion. We must engage religious leaders and adherents. We must build on the resources for tolerance and peace that exist within religious traditions in order to promote stability, peace and security in Africa.

We must strengthen partnerships for recognizing and promoting the contribution of women to peace, stability and growth. As my delegation noted in another forum, Africa is a continent where for too long women's contributions to peace, democracy and development have been underemphasized in our discussions. That must change. We must acknowledge that women hold up half the sky in Africa. We believe that such an acknowledgement will build better partnerships to support women to hold up the skies in less tiring and painful ways.

We urge the promotion of programmes that acknowledge youth as dignified, humane and productive forces for Africa's current and future development. Africa has more young people as a percentage of its population than any other continent. Acknowledging and promoting youth is Africa's best chance for overcoming its stability, peace and development challenges, an effort that must be integral to our actions.

We must also acknowledge the threat caused by diseases and environmental degradation to peace, stability and security. Sierra Leone and its neighbours teetered on the brink when Ebola struck. We defeated Ebola, and we are now implementing a post-Ebola recovery plan. Success with that programme is as important as the peacekeeping that sustained our peace following the civil war of the 1990s. We urge partnerships for resilient health-care systems in order to ensure stability, peace and development.

Malaria continues to be a serious health concern for the continent. It is unfortunate that the disease, which is completely preventable and treatable, should continue to kill thousands of people, especially children, on our continent. We must therefore continue to closely cooperate in the global pursuit of the goals of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance and the Action and Investment to Defeat Malaria 2016-2030, the latter as the successor to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. It is in that regard that my delegation welcomes the continued commitment of the international community to eradicating malaria and other diseases.

Sierra Leone contributes almost nothing to global warming, but we are adjudged to be the third most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change. That is why for us climate change is an immediate existential threat. That is why we welcome the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We are committed to implementing its provisions in Sierra Leone, and we seek increased global action on implementing the provisions of the Agreement and other environmental protocols.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Sierra Leone's strongest support for NEPAD.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 2011(XX), of 11 October 1965, and decision 56/475, of 15 August 2002, I now call on the observer of the African Union.

Mr. Mayaki (African Union): The African continent is demonstrating that it is capable of economic, political and social transformation. As the technical body of the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) mechanism is central to those transformative efforts. The role of that mechanism is to implement the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want in a manner coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The quality of that implementation will depend on sound ownership and sound partnerships.

The year 2016 consolidated the gains made following the adoption of Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, for the period 2014-2023. That strategic framework has set highly ambitious targets for achieving the Africa We Want, namely, a continent that is stable, prosperous and at peace with itself. Through the common African positions, the Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been aligned with Agenda 2063, creating productive synergies and opening strong areas

for collaborative action. Agenda 2063 is an effective vehicle through which Africa can implement the SDGs. In the light of that convergence, the continued support of the international community for pan-African institutions will be instrumental. That support should be particularly reinforced as regards the African Peer Review Mechanism, Africa's leading body for governance improvement. The SDGs can succeed only if they succeed in Africa.

Infrastructure remains one of Africa's top priorities. As one of the main coordinators of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), we underscore the need for seeking investments from various sources for its implementation. To that end, we have set up a continental business network that allows for engagement among a network of high-level African policymakers and the private sector on a range of strategic issues that are directed at promoting investments in regional and domestic infrastructure projects.

On the margins of the opening of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the NEPAD agency concerned held a dialogue at the New York Stock Exchange with 16 pension funds and sovereign wealth funds, focusing on the roles of the private and public sectors in de-risking infrastructure development projects identified as priorities for the continent. In order to improve Africa's investment attractiveness in the infrastructure area, we also launched a transboundary initiative on transport and logistics called MoveAfrica in May 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. That continental instrument aims to drive down costs and increase logistical efficiency for operators working in Africa, thereby complementing PIDA and the programme for the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative and the One Stop Border Posts and facilitating regional integration.

Agriculture and rural development continue to be a key strategic focus for NEPAD. Following the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, we revisited the support extended to countries and regions by opting for a more thematic focus. That shift was informed by a series of country reviews aimed at promoting the design of concrete agricultural transformation systems, based on ownership at the national level, making sure that small-scale farmers are not left behind, particularly women.

NEPAD has also been instrumental in transferring the Grow Africa secretariat from the World Economic Forum to NEPAD in order to boost agribusiness development in accordance with the principles of responsible investment in agriculture and food systems, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Together with Japan, we jointly launched the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa. The Initiative will establish a framework for collaboration among African Governments and partners aimed at accelerating the implementation of their food and nutrition security policies on the ground.

In preparation for the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Marrakesh, we plan to play a convening role as the secretariat to the African Ministers Conference on the Environment, so as to further implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Two issues will be critical for Africa in Marrakesh: agriculture and energy.

Science, technology and innovation are at the forefront of NEPAD's efforts to achieve inclusive growth. We have bolstered our interventions in science, technology and innovation at the national, regional and continental levels with the main goal of embedding those critical tools in our efforts to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. We are continuing to seek out pioneering approaches towards industrialization and have taken the lead by establishing the Kaizen-Africa Initiative, which aims to improve productivity, quality and competitiveness of the private sector in Africa.

Skills development and employment for youth are also a current challenge for African countries in their efforts to promote economic development, growth and social stability. The lack of educational and meaningful economic opportunities forces many young people to search for a more prosperous future elsewhere. The NEPAD Agency, under the African Union Commission, is supported by Germany in the implementation of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme. That programme promotes the occupational prospects of young Africans through the support of innovative skills-development programmes. We believe in attracting young people to the agriculture sector for sustained growth and job creation. NEPAD, through its Agriculture Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme, is partnering with the private sector to offer training along various stages of the agriculture value chains.

Before concluding, allow me to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who throughout his tenure championed energy through his initiative on Sustainable Energy for All. NEPAD continues to work with strategic partners, such as Power Africa, to make that laudable initiative a reality.

(*spoke in French*)

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our warm congratulations to the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, on his election. Similarly, I would like to congratulate Under-Secretary-General Maged Abdelaziz, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, for the efforts he has undertaken at the United Nations in order to ensure the Organization's ongoing interest in the continent. The great success of Africa Week is a testament to that interest. The African Union reaffirms that Africa is prepared to define its own fate, in partnership with the rest of the world. Regarding the universal implementation of the SDGs, Africa will focus on pragmatism and partnership. Agenda 2063 will be the operational instrument to that end.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.